

May 13, 2021

Dear Students, Families and Staff:

Planning for the 2021-2022 school year

I hope this letter finds you well, and that you and your family continue to take care of each other as we deal with the prolonged impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. On behalf of the entire Senior Administration, I want to acknowledge the challenges that you have experienced during the past 18 months; we recognize it has not been easy.

In previous letters, I have mentioned that planning is already underway for the new school year starting September 3, 2021 for staff and September 7, 2021 for students. Late last week, the Ministry of Education sent a memo to school boards with additional guidance for preparations.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

We are planning to operate elementary schools full-time and in person. Elementary students will continue to be cohorted with their classmates and their homeroom teacher. Specialized teachers, for classes such as French, the arts, or health and physical education, will be able to go into classrooms to provide the full range of programming for students.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

We are planning to operate secondary schools full-time, in person and with a continued emphasis on cohorting students to limit student-to-student contact. Students will take two courses each day, one in the morning and another in the afternoon, for a 10-week block. This schedule is known as a quadmester, dividing the school year into four, 10-week blocks. We will communicate at a later date if any changes to this schedule are required.

The Ministry of Education has asked school boards to have plans to switch to online learning, if necessary. Our experience over the past year has taught us a lot about online learning. I am confident that educators and support staff will be able to provide seamless learning and engagement, if the switch is required.

More guidance from the Ministry of Education about health and safety measures for the 2021-2022 school year will be communicated to school boards this summer. I expect that will include guidance for masking, hand hygiene and screening.

Over the past two school years, the pandemic has had a significant impact on the delivery of education in Ontario. Everyone has demonstrated resilience and flexibility in responding to these changes and for that I thank you. We recognize that whatever mode of learning you choose for your children, ultimately the decision is yours and we respect your choice.

At Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board, we remain committed to the learning, well-being and safety of everyone in the HPEDSB family. We are doing our best to communicate the facts as soon as we know them and this will continue as new information is released.

I wish you the very best. Please stay safe and, equally important, remain hopeful.

Thank you for your patience and ongoing support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sean Monteith', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sean Monteith
Director of Education